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REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF CENTRES PARTICIPATING IN THE STATISTICAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA (STPA)

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The fifth meeting of Directors of centres participating in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa, from 28 to 30 October 1987. It was opened by the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA.

2. The Directors of the following STPA centres or their representatives attended the meeting: Centre européen de formation des statisticiens - économistes des pays en voie de développement (CESD), Paris; Collège statistique de Dakar; Department of Statistics, National University of Lesotho, Maseru; Department of Statistics, University of Ghana, Legon; Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan; Ecole nationale supérieure de statistique et d'économie appliquée (ENSEA), Abidjan; Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre, (EASTC), Dar-es-Salaam; Institut africain et mauricien de statistique et d'économie appliquée (IAMSEA), Kigali; Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD), Yaounde; Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University, Kampala; Institut sous-regional de statistique et d'économie appliquée (ISSEA), Yaounde and the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), Legon, Ghana.

3. The following user countries were also represented at the meeting: Guinea Bissau and Senegal.

4. Representatives of two associate STPA centres also attended the meeting, namely the International Statistical Programs Centre (ISPC), Washington, D.C. and the Munich Centre for Advanced Training.

5. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the Statistical Office of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) were represented.

6. Observers from the following agencies and organizations also attended the meeting: the Commission of European Communities (Directorate-General for Development and the Statistical Office of the European Communities); the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the University of Addis Ababa. The Institute of Economic Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Statistics Institute of Portugal and the Swedish Bureau of Statistics also sent observers to the meeting.

7. The following officers were elected:

Chairman: Mr. S.I.K. Oddoye, head of the Department of Statistics, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana; Vice-chairman: Mr. Idrisse Guira, Director of IAMSEA, Kigali, Rwanda; Rapporteur: Mrs. C. Lekena, Head, Department of Statistics, National University of Lesotho, Maseru, Lesotho.

B. AGENDA

8. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening address
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organisational matters

4. Matters arising from the fourth meeting of Directors of centres participating in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA)

5. Statistical training activities at STPA centres and at National Statistical Offices or middle level training centres at national level

   (a) Evaluation of the use of guide syllabuses in the teaching programmes at the training centres and national statistical offices

   (b) Progress in the implementation of in-service training/middle level training at national level in African countries

   (c) Development and improvement of post-graduate training and research at STPA centres

   (d) Report on workshops and seminars conducted during 1986-1987 and those planned for the period 1988-1989

   (e) The Graduate Diploma course of the Institute of Statisticians: Survey of the demand for the course in Eastern and Southern African countries

6. Development in statistical organisation and staffing since 1981 in the African region

7. Technical and financial assistance in the field of statistical training:

   (a) United Nations System

   (b) EEC assistance to STPA

   (c) Assistance to Portuguese-speaking African countries in the field of statistical training

   (d) Bilateral and other multilateral agencies and institutions

8. Application to become an associate centre of STPA: Department of Probability and Statistics, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

9. Document on creating and strengthening a statistics teaching group

10. Future work programme for the implementation of STPA for the period 1987-1991

11. Other business

12. Adoption of the report

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening address

9. After welcoming participants to the meeting, the Deputy Executive Secretary expressed his appreciation to representatives of national and international donor agencies attending the meeting and extended a special welcome to the delegation from Portugal. He then recalled the objectives of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa and stressed its role within the context of the economic crisis that the African continent was currently going through.

10. The objectives of the Programme had still not been fully attained although significant progress had been made since the programme was initiated in 1978. Some of the problems that had been encountered in trying to achieve the objectives of the STPA included: the inadequate number of fellowships offered to trainees to study at STPA centres, inadequate teaching facilities such as buildings and equipment and insignificant attention given to post-graduate and specialized training at STPA centres.

11. He was pleased to note that in addition to financial assistance of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies provided to African countries, in order to improve statistical training activities, the United Nations Development Programme had in its fourth programming cycle (1987-1991) allocated to ECA the sum of US$2,099,000 for Statistical Development in Africa which included the regional component of STPA. The implementation of the "EEC Assistance to STPA" project was continuing; it covered an initial financial package of 1,025,000 European Units of Account (ECU) released under the Lome II Convention. He also welcomed the provision of additional assistance in the area of micro-computers.

12. In accordance with the new strategy adopted for the fourth UNDP Programming Cycle 1987-1991, the UNDP funds mentioned above had been provided under a project entitled "Statistical Development Programme for Africa" (SDPA) (1987-1991) covering activities in statistical training, household surveys and basic economic statistics. Those activities had previously been financed under separate projects but were now integrated into one project in order to achieve better impact and co-ordination.

13. He indicated that in future years, additional resources would have to be placed at the disposal of STPA centres to enable them to fully contribute to the achievement of STPA objectives especially by providing them with visiting lecturers, granting fellowships for the training of trainers and supplying them with teaching materials and technical support for organizing short-term seminars and courses.

14. One of the main concerns of the ECA Conference of Ministers held in Yaounde in April 1988 had been the need for financial support from bilateral and multilateral donor agencies to Portuguese-speaking African countries in order to establish statistical training programmes for those countries. He invited the meeting to discuss in particular the establishment in Guinea Bissau of a national middle-level statistical training centre which will offer regional services to Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and the establishment of middle-level national training centres in Mozambique and Angola. He welcomed the Portuguese project of establishing a professional statistical training school in Lisbon within which will exist a centre for the training of Portuguese-speaking African students.

15. He concluded by reminding participants of the important role that their meeting had to play in advising the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers and the ECA Conference of Ministers on ways and means of promoting and strengthening statistical training in Africa.

D. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FOURTH MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF CENTRES PARTICIPATING IN THE STATISTICAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA (Agenda item 4)

16. The secretariat presented document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/1 on the main matters arising from the fourth meeting of Directors of centres participating in STPA which are as follows:

(a) Collecting information from the centres in order to prepare a list of staff members and their areas of specialization with a view to promoting the exchange of lecturers from one centre to another in the form of consultants;

(b) Preparing textbooks by STPA centres and Associate centres and their dissemination to other centres;

(c) The organization of a preliminary two-month course in mathematics for the benefit of students from Portuguese-speaking African countries intending to obtain admission to the Kigali, Yaounde and Abidjan centres;

(d) Self-reliance of African governments with respect to assistance to STPA centres in terms of provision of fellowships for their nationals to study at STPA centres outside their countries; and

(e) The publication by ECA of a digest of research conducted at African statistical training centres.

17. With respect to the first question, the meeting was told of the need to draw up a list of teaching staff at STPA centres in order to promote the exchange of lecturers among centres in the form of consultants. The secretariat indicated that those centres that had not yet done so should send details of their lecturers to ECA to enable it to draw up the above-mentioned list. The meeting suggested that the secretariat should contact the directors of the centres for that purpose. The secretariat informed the meeting that ECA was also preparing a list of consultants in various subject areas including statistics under the Pan African Information and Documentation System (PAIDS).

18. With respect to textbooks or photocopies of lecture notes, the meeting admitted that some STPA centres had such textbooks and regretted that it had not been possible to send such documents to the ECA secretariat because of financial implications. Some participants mentioned the possibility of publishing some lectures but expressed reservations as to the copyright implications. The meeting agreed to proceed in stages and solve the simplest problems first. In the same way, the meeting suggested that the secretariat should endeavour to make a complete inventory of teaching material available at the STPA centres. Appropirate action on how to disseminate these could be taken later.

19. As far as securing enough fellowships for statistical training at STPA centres was concerned, some participants felt that action had not yet been taken to implement resolution 576(XXI) adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers requesting African governments to give greater priority to statistical training. Other participants said that they had problems as far as fellowships offered by donor agencies such as the European Economic Community and the Commonwealth Secretariat and financed from the indicative planning figures for the country programmes were concerned.

20. The meeting felt that matters relating to assistance to Portuguese-speaking African countries and the publication of a digest of research conducted at African statistical training centres should be discussed in detail when considering the agenda items on those issues.

E. EVALUATION OF THE USE OF GUIDE SYLLABUSES IN THE TEACHING PROGRAMMES AT TRAINING CENTRES AND NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES (Agenda item 5(a))

21. The secretariat introduced the agenda item which was based on document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/2 and explained that six guide syllabuses at the professional, middle and in-service training levels were developed by ECA between 1982 and 1985. The evaluation of their use had become necessary in order to determine which guide syllabuses needed revision and the priority to be accorded to this aspect of the work of STPA and whether more effort was needed to promote their use. The secretariat explained further that in order to evaluate the use of the guide syllabuses, an evaluation survey was conducted covering aspects of application, quality, usefulness and achievement of the original objectives for designing the guide syllabuses. The secretariat also mentioned the development of guide syllabuses for in-service training and middle level training for use at training centres to be established in the Portuguese-speaking African countries.

22. In the discussion which followed, it emerged that up to 80% of the content of the guide syllabuses may have been used in some centres. The use of the guide syllabuses was through formal reviews of syllabuses of the centres or through comparing a particular topic/subject in the guide syllabus to ensure that the centres corresponding syllabus is in line with its general direction and scope. It was explained that for new centres or new teaching programmes, it may be easy to adapt parts of the guide syllabuses while for old centres it is not easy to modify at short notice the syllabuses which have been established for a long period. The meeting concluded that the use of the guide syllabuses at STPA centres was probably more than what was reflected in the results of the evaluation survey. It was observed that the guide syllabus for professional training for the French-speaking countries has two levels: the Ingénieur statisticien économiste (ISE) and the Ingénieur des travaux statistiques (ITS). It is therefore difficult to analyse the information from the survey on the use of guide syllabuses and obtain meaningful conclusions with respect to the two levels.

23. The meeting was informed that copies of the guide syllabuses were used by the UN Statistical Office as reference materials for a meeting on statistical training organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). ESCAP found them useful.

24. With respect to the promotion of the use of the guide syllabuses, several participants expressed the view that if the guide syllabuses were sufficiently complete and comprehensive they would be self promoting. Hence any revision of the guide syllabuses should take this into account. The introductory sections could be expanded to state, more fully, the need for the courses proposed and the approaches recommended. One participant observed that if the guide syllabuses were to be expanded in this way, this would be a large task indeed. It was further suggested that, in order to promote the use of the guide syllabuses, teachers must be brought together to review the contents of their syllabuses particularly in view of the fact that training centres have their own peculiarities. The idea of having common core subjects and a set of optional subjects for all the training centres was mentioned.

25. Some participants suggested that the admission requirements and the content and duration of the courses at the centres should be standardised as is the practice in some of the French-speaking STPA centres such as the Kigali, Yaounde and Abidjan. At these centres common entrance examinations are administered. This suggestion was thought not to be a practicable one in some centres and that the idea should be to aim for the same common, final training objective even if the starting points are different.

26. With respect to the harmonization of courses, it was mentioned that it may not be proper to insist on harmonization. It was recognized that it may be difficult to harmonize courses and that the important objective should be that at the end of the course the products should be at the same level, that is to say, the centres should work towards a convergence of standards.

27. With regard to the guide syllabuses themselves, in particular the professional level training guide syllabus for the English-speaking countries, one participant referred to certain assumptions made about the levels of entry into the training programme and the mathematics requirements. These assumptions and requirements did not make the guide syllabus flexible. He wished that the revisions would lead to a more flexible document that would take account of differences in the entry qualifications to the various training centres.

28. With respect to the Eastern and Southern African countries, the representative of EASTC suggested that an intra-country co-ordinating unit/committee may need to be established to look into the in-service training programmes existing in the Eastern and Southern Africa sub-region. The problem of acceptability of the unit/committee to the countries were mentioned. It was suggested by the secretariat that in addition to the advisory services provided by the ECA secretariat to the countries of the sub-region, the EASTC centre would have to work closely with countries in the sub-region through its advisory board and establish strong links before such a unit/committee could be proposed for acceptance by the countries.

29. On the revision of the guide syllabuses, the secretariat suggested that the revisions should be undertaken every five years from the year the guide syllabus was produced or last reviewed to be able to take into account new developments. The meeting agreed to the secretariat proposal. It was noted that in this regard the English and French middle level guide syllabuses should be revised in the next two years before the sixth meeting of directors of STPA centres.

30. Some participants expressed the view that before a revision is undertaken, it is better to establish reasons why some centres have not used the guide syllabuses. This can be done in the form of a survey. Another approach which was suggested was that of examining the use of the guide syllabuses on a subject/topic comparison basis with the existing syllabuses at the centres and examining the divergences to see if they were wide or narrow. The result of such studies would assist in the revision of the syllabuses.

F. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING/MIDDLE LEVEL TRAINING AT NATIONAL LEVEL IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES (Agenda item 5(b))

31. The secretariat introduced the agenda item on the basis of document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/3. The introductory statement dealt with (i) the background to the training of middle level statistical staff prior to the formulation of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA) in 1976, (ii) actions taken within the framework of the STPA with the view to promote this type of training, (iii) recommendations of the second and third sessions of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers as well as the conclusions of the EEC/ACP/ECA study on statistical training needs in Africa, and (iv) additional actions undertaken by ECA as part of the promotion of in-service statistical training/middle level statistical training at national level.

32. During the ensuing discussions, the meeting agreed that it was necessary to analyse separately the situation existing in English- and French-speaking countries. In the English-speaking countries, the training of middle level staff sometimes took the form of in-service training programmes, whereas in the French-speaking countries this training was provided in institutions set up for that purpose. In the former case, training of middle level statistical staff was geared towards achieving two purposes, namely improving the qualifications of working clerks and enumerators to equip national statistical services and other sectors of the national economy with an adequate number of middle level statisticians. In the latter case, it was a question of providing a standard type of training which aimed at training sufficient numbers of middle level statistical staff who will be accepted by their respective national civil services at prescribed grade levels.

33. Participants discussed the problems impeding the promotion of the organisation of training for the middle level staff in the countries of the region. Particularly it was acknowledged that, in the English-speaking countries, one of those problems was the fact that certificates issued at the end of in-service training programmes were often not recognised, for purposes of advancement, by the relevant authorities usually the civil service commission. Certification by a recognized examining body or training centre was required for advancement in the service. The meeting was of the view that that problem could be resolved through arrangements between the civil service authorities, national statistical services and a training centre which would undertake to monitor the in-service training programme and conduct examinations for the award of a recognized certificate. Some participants, namely those from the statistics departments of the universities of Ghana and Ibadan, informed the meeting of measures taken by their countries to resolve that problem. These measures were in line with the views expressed by the meeting.

34. The representative of the UN Statistical Office briefed the meeting on a new project of assistance for organising in-service statistical training in Malawi, and on the possibility of using the on-the-job training project financed by the regular budget of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) for a form of in-service training.

35. In the French-speaking countries, promotion in the public service was generally subject to passing an officially recognised examination. The organisation of an in-service training programme by a statistical office was not a guarantee for automatic promotion within the public services of the French-speaking countries. National units for the training of middle level statistical staff were being established in some French-speaking countries with the assistance of the Commission of the European Communities, the French Assistance and Cooperation Fund and the World Bank.

36. The meeting noted that progress had been made in the implementation of in-service training/middle level training programmes, but observed that despite those achievements, the proportions of middle level statistical staff to professional level staff in national statistical services were still unsatisfactory. One reason for this is the loss of trained middle level staff to other services or state institutions. There were also classes from the middle level category due to the pursuit of higher training for professional jobs.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF POST-GRADUATE TRAINING AND RESEARCH AT STPA CENTRES (Agenda item 5(c))

37. The secretariat introduced the background document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/4 and said that it dealt with post-graduate training and research. Information on the STPA centres which organize post-graduate training programmes was provided including suggestions on ways of improving usch post-graduate training. On research, the results of a survey conducted by the secretariat on the status of research activities at STPA centres were described and suggestions made on the ways research activities at the STPA centres could be improved.

38. In the discussion which followed, the representatives of "Ecole nationale supérieure de statistique et d'économie appliquée (ENSEA)", Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University, Uganda and Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria provided additional information regarding the programmes offered at their centres. At ENSEA, the ISE post-graduate programme is now operational beginning 1987 with eight students from Tunisia, Madagascar, Zaire and Côte d'Ivoire. At ISAE the post-graduate diploma, M.Stat., M.A. demography and Ph.D. programmes are all operational. The Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan continues to offer post-graduate programmes, at four levels, namely post-graduate diploma, M.Sc., M.Phil. and Ph.D.

39. The Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), Ghana representative raised the problem of striking a balance between the most experienced and the best academically qualified candidates for admission to the one year M.A programme in demography. Since the degrees are awarded by the University of Ghana, there is an admission requirement which stipulates that students to be admitted to this programme must have at least a second class bachelors degree. In some cases the most experienced civil servants strongly recommended by the government do not possess the minimum qualifications, while in-experienced newly employed officials do possess the required academic qualifications. The meeting made some proposals regarding the solution to this problem such as the provision of a preliminary training programme to enable the students to qualify for entry into the post-graduate programme. Another solution is to introduce pre-masters or pre-post-graduate programmes as is done in some overseas institutions with the purpose of giving the students a chance to benefit from additional training before being formally admitted into the normal graduate programmes.

40. The problems of limited number of teaching staff at the STPA centres to enable them teach a full load of the post-graduate programmes and conduct research at the same time were mentioned by a number of participants. One of the participants informed the meeting that such a problem was resolved at his training centre by reducing the frequency of recruitment of students, instead of yearly recruitment, the centre

recruited once every two years. This enabled the limited staff to manage the implementation of its post-graduate programmes. The concept of reducing the recruitment frequency was thought by some participants to be a difficult one to sell particularly in the English-speaking countries which inherited the tradition of recruiting students every year.

41. In view of the fact that some of the STPA centres are now introducing and will emphasize post-graduate training at their centres some participants mentioned the need to provide senior experts in the form of visiting lecturers to keep the programmes running. It was mentioned that senior and experienced experts are required for this. The ECA secretariat was requested to look into this matter seriously. In the area of staff development, some participants felt that there was need for well programmed fellowships to enable STPA centres to train their lecturers. It was stated that such a staff development programme should be worked out by each STPA centres.

42. In reply, the secretariat informed the meeting that in view of the limited funds available in the regional component of the STPA, it was not possible to provide all the needed assistance. However, it was hoped that through the assistance of other bilateral and multilateral donor agencies in the field of statistics, some of the requests of the centres could be satisfied. Requests for assistance from STPA centres which have not benefited from the STPA funds are being given priority in the STPA regional component in addition to requests from centres which have been identified to be strengthened in post-graduate programmes.

43. On the conduct of research some participants mentioned that this is a requirement in their centres. The type of research conducted by these centres was in general of a theoretical type and that applied research tended to be neglected due to lack of funds for purchase of equipment. This is where donor support is needed most.

44. Several suggestions were made on how to improve research at the centres. Among these suggestions are (i) donors should consider the provision of funds, controlled by themselves, to STPA centres to enable centres finance research and (ii) identification of research projects that would be of interest to the private sector and which would therefore attract funding from that sector. This approach would be in line with the new strategy of participation of the private sector which is being emphasized by UNDP and other donors.

45. Information was provided to the effect that some centres do in fact carry out research funded by the private sector. However, it was mentioned that the funding to be provided by the private sector would normally be in local currency and therefore some of the research equipment requiring foreign currency for their purchase may be difficult to obtain. In this regard the private sector funding may not resolve all the problems relating to research at the centres. Another point which was raised is that the private sector in many countries is still in its infancy stage except for those that are linked to multinational corporations.

46. One participant referred to the problem of the definition of research and that such a definition was necessary in order to facilitate the completion of the questionnaire on the status of research at STPA centres which was sent to the centres and to ensure that responses were more standardized. The secretariat explained that the

term research had the same meaning as usually applied in universities. In the secretariat's view, research covered a wide range of activities such as student's projects at sub-degree or degree levels, student post-graduate research (thesis etc.), staff research (individual or collective), etc.

47. The representative of EASTC explained that although his centre carries out students research projects annually, these were not reported in the survey questionnaire which was sent to the secretariat. As of now the centre has collected from the students' projects, sufficient research data which may require further analysis. Once computer and library facilities have been established at the centre, research will form one of the major activities.

48. With respect to the proposal that ECA should publish a research digest, a participant expressed the view that such a digest was premature at this stage in view of the fact that there is not enough research activity at the various centres to sustain the publication of a digest on a regular basis. He proposed that the secretariat should publish occasional research news.

49. The representative of ISAE referred to the discussion which took place at the last meeting of the Advisory Council of his centre in September 1986 at which the EEC were represented. The EEC representative at that meeting mentioned that his organisation was willing to hold annual meetings on the use of software packages when the micro-network to be acquired by the centre is fully operational. The EEC representative further mentioned that such software would be deposited at the centre and would enhance post-graduate training and research. With respect to the supply of micro-computers by the EEC to ISAE, the representative of ISAE wondered when these micro computers would be delivered.

50. In reply, the EEC representative explained that following the joint EEC/ACP/ECA study on statistical training needs in Africa, a sum of 90,000 ECU (Lome II Convention funds) were provided under the project "EEC assistance to STPA' to take care of the needs for computer equipment. Later an additional sum of 400,000 ECU was allocated for computer training and equipment following the increased need, in the field of micro-computers and the project document prepared by ECA. She explained that the funds allocated for computer training and equipment would only be utilized following the requests formulated by all the countries using the concerned regional centre through the competent national authorities (national authorising officer).

51. With regard to the utilisation of Lome II Convention funds, the EEC representative gave information regarding the twinnings of EASTC and ISAE and supply of equipment to various anglophone centres, also the difficulties experienced in communicating with some of the STPA centres. She mentioned that there was need to make arrangements with the ECA to resolve the communication problems. Mention was also made of the training of trainers which could be linked to twinning and also the use of trainee lecturers.

52. The CESD representative gave additional information regarding the EEC assistance to STPA. He indicated that the management of the funds allocated to STPA under Lome II were subcontracted to various institutions located in Europe. This is not the same for the total of 400,000 ECU funds allocated under Lome III and intended for computer training and supply of micro-computers to STPA centres. Further an evaluation report, prepared by EEC on the EEC assistance in statistical training indicated that centres do not have the same problems now in the area of computer equipment and that their needs have with time changed.

53. With respect to requests for EEC assistance coming from regional training institutions for the funds allocated under Lome III, the EEC representative explained that the signatures of all the participating countries would be required for the request to be considered for funding.

54. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the new arrangements since most of them envisaged problems in trying to get approval of their requests by the competent national authorities (national authorising officers) in addition to delays which are expected to occur through the bureaucratic machinery. While realising that the situation could not be changed, the meeting strongly felt that the EEC should consider identifying a suitable European institution to facilitate arrangements for the supply of the equipment to STPA centres in the same way as was done with the funds from Lome II Convention.

55. With respect to the request for the micro computers, a participant at the meeting expressed the view that requests for micro computers should include softwares and that the STPA regional component should organize a system of circulating information on software acquired by the centres to other STPA centres and users.

H. REPORT ON WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS CONDUCTED DURING 1986-1987 AND THOSE PLANNED FOR THE PERIOD 1988-1989 (Agenda item 5(d))

56. The secretariat's presentation of this item was based on document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/5 and covered seminars and workshops organized by STPA centres and associate STPA centres during the period 1986-1987 and workshops and seminars planned by those centres for the period 1988-1989.

57. With respect to the programme planned for the period 1988-1989, the secretariat noted that most of the STPA centres that intended organizing seminars and workshops had still not secured the financing required. Only CESD had indicated that it had secured financing for one of its seminars from the French Ministry of Co-operation.

58. With respect to the associate centres, it was noted that the Applied Statistics Research Unit (ASRU) of the University of Kent and the International Statistical Programs Centre (ISPC) of Washington expected to carry out their usual programmes. The Munich Centre for Advanced Training planned to diversify its activities and lay special emphasis on seminars held in African countries.

59. Participants were requested to give to the secretariat updated lists of seminars and workshops organized in 1986-1987 and those planned for 1988-1989 as well as their contribution to the best method of organizing workshops and seminars for serving African statisticians.

60. The ensuing discussions focussed on the ability of STPA centres to organize seminars and related financing problems.

61. The Munich Centre informed the meeting that it was setting new objectives which included: increasing the number of seminars in Africa, a choice of multi-disciplinary topics, activities supporting the user producer communication and preparing teaching materials for its courses and seminars in a way that parts of these training materials could be used by other centres and departments of statistics for their training activities.

62. The secretariat indicated that it was prepared to help as much as possible in organizing seminars by providing discussion leaders and lecturers as well as documents. It indicated, however, that its current resources did not allow it to consider bearing the costs of participation in such seminars.

63. The secretariat felt that the choice of items by the centres should take into account the priorities of their programmes and the interests of donors. The secretariat pointed out that among the criteria on which these donors could finance these seminars are the formulation of the projects for the seminars and the financial difficulties faced by the centre. The secretariat urged participants to become more aware of the need for relying on local resources to organize such seminars.

64. The following centres provided additional information on their planned seminars which would be published in "STPA News": The Munich Centre for Advanced Training, EASTC, IFORD and ISAE.

I. THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA COURSE OF THE INSTITUTE OF STATISTICIANS (IOS). SURVEY OF THE DEMAND FOR THE COURSE IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES (Agenda item 5(e))

65. The secretariat introduced the agenda item which was based on document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/0 and explained that the preparation of the document was requested by the fourth meeting of Directors of centres participating in the STPA to enable a decision to be taken on whether the graduate diploma course of the IOS should be established at the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC) for the benefit of the Eastern and Southern African countries. The secretariat also provided background information on the IOS and its examination system including highlights of the results of the survey conducted by the secretariat during 1987 on the demand for the course in the sub-region.

66. One participant noted that the introduction of the course at the EASTC would involve extra responsibility to the centre particularly in view of the financial implications of mounting the course.

67. A question was raised by a participant concerning the suitability of the Graduate Diploma of the IOS syllabus to African conditions if the course was to be mounted in Africa. The secretariat explained that if the course was to be mounted anywhere in Africa, the syllabuses would need to be amended to conform to the needs of Africa. The IOS was agreable to this suggestion.

68. Some participants observed that in examining the results of the survey only three countries Mauritius, Uganda and Zambia had expressed the need for the course. They however wondered whether an in-service training programme might not serve the purposes of those studying for these examinations. On whether the course could be mounted at EASTC, the Acting Director of the centre stated that, in view of the fact that the demand for the course is limited to a few countries only there appeared to be no need for EASTC to conduct such a course. Further, he stated that mounting full time courses would not be an attractive investment in view of the low pass rate which is typical of such examinations and the lack of control of his centre over the examination. Perhaps a crash training programme of short duration could be provided by the centre but there was no need to get heavily involved in a full time course.

69. The meeting considered alternative arrangements which could be made for assisting those students in the countries wishing to take the graduate diploma examinations of the IOS. The representative of the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, Uganda stated that it is possible to mount a crash programme of a short duration at his centre just before the examinations take place to assist these students. It is also possible for the ISAE to arrange to conduct the examinations on behalf of the IOS. The secretariat provided information concerning the arrangements made by Mauritius for assisting those sitting the IOS examinations. The Central Statistical Office in Mauritius mounts ad hoc in-service training courses for its staff members covering different levels of the IOS examinations in particular the preliminary and Stage I of the examinations. This is particularly important because the scheme of service of the central statistical office of Mauritius clearly emphasizes the IOS qualifications.

70. The meeting recommended that countries wishing to assist those of their staff studying for the examinations should mount short ad hoc in-service training courses, as has been done in Mauritius.

J. DEVELOPMENT IN STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING SINCE 1981 IN THE AFRICAN REGION (Agenda item 8)

71. The secretariat introduced this item on the basis of document ECA/STAT/EM.5-STPA/87/7 which examined, on the basis of the results of the two surveys carried out in 1981 and 1987, the major changes in national statistical services (NSS) of the region. It hoped that participants would consider particularly the issues of expertise which national statistical services would need, management problems of those services, data processing and data analysis by the NSS.

72. The Director of Statistics of Senegal, representing the users of the STPA centres, acknowledged the existence of management problems within NSS of the region and felt that these services should place themselves within an environment full of changes. She suggested inter alia, three rules that should govern the operations of those services.

73. The first rule is that NSS should be managed as a production service, special emphasis being placed on the notion of statistical production. She was of the opinion that the NSS should continue to examine themselves on the basis of results achieved and should constantly listen to users.

74. The second rule concerned the need for the NSS to accept audit criticisms of their activities. The Director recommended that NSS should focus their efforts on activities within their competence.

75. The third rule consisted in seizing every opportunity because resources were today scarce and it was no use to lament over that situation. She therefore suggested the preparation of a multi-year work programme based on the realities. She was of the opinion that it was possible to articulate a statistical programme which is project linked, for instance, to the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER). In that way, donors could finance, at least partially, the statistical programme in question. In that regard, the Director re-iterated

the view of the secretariat that if the NSS were credible, they would find the resources needed for their operations.

76. The Director of Statistics of Seneral further registered her support for the view expressed by the secretariat in paragraph 40 of the document under consideration, that it was necessary to improve the management of the NSS so as to better use the available limited resources. She encouraged the secretariat to further develop that point.

77. As regards staffing, she regretted that NSS could no longer recruit staff in most of the countries of the region due to the need to reduce the size of the public service. She also felt that the excessive homogenization of the staff of NSS was a contributive factor for the laxity, for the staff felt they were interchangeable and each one expected another to do his work. She suggested that NSS should endeavour to diversify as much as possible their statistical staff, for instance, by sending some already working statisticians for training in related fields of statistics but not necessarily in statistics.

78. The Director further indicated that the preparation of a national plan of action in her country had compelled her department to work within the specified periods, in other words within the deadlines. That practice should be adopted by the NSS of the region.

79. Finally, she suggested that training centres should activate their workshops at the level of the NSS, for sub-regional and regional workshops benefited only a small group of persons.

80. The meeting acknowledged the relevance of the issues raised by the Director of Statistics of Seneral, which constituted an excellent basis of departure for thinking about the problems of the organization and staffing of NSS. It recommended that ECA should request the Director to prepare a document on the improvement of the management of the NSS for the next session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers. In this connection some participants proposed that for future meetings of Directors of STPA centres, the secretariat could request them to prepare some of the background documents.

81. One participant observed that some of the countries which had participated in both 1981 and 1987 surveys were relatively small in size. Consequently, the results of the study did not reflect the real situation, especially as the inclusion of a large country like Nigeria in the results distorated the picture. To him, some of the figures contained in the table of annex II of the document under consideration, presented incomprehensible developments. On that issue, the secretariat explained that the figures contained in the table were supplied by the countries themselves.

82. Another participant felt that training centres could contribute to the organization of specialised training programmes if only national statistical offices could indicate the areas of specialisation required.

83. Some participants emphasised that, in some countries, the few trained statisticians could not find jobs or were offered temporary jobs. They felt that a means should be found to utilise those statisticians in other sectors. This would entail changes in the training programmes. They also raised the problem of students who refused to return to their countries after training, particularly those in developed countries.

84. One participant cited his centre as an example to show that a survey could be designed, conducted and its results made available within a reasonable period of time.

85. Another participant indicated that the training programme of his centre had to be adjusted so as to meet the needs of the statistical service of his country. Measures were being taken to evaluate the statisticians of his country and as a result they had now been classified with the professional category in the national public service.

86. Finally, the Director of Statistics of Guinea Bissau informed the meeting that a national statistical system was being evolved beginning the current year in his country on the basis of the experiences of other countries of the region. He observed that at times, donors imposed, on national projects, the temporary recruitment of additional national staff whereas the countries sometimes faced problems of local and foreign currency to cope with additional expenses involved in the execution of a survey. The representative of UNDP replied to this statement that as far as his organization was concerned, the work plan is established by the project document at the time of project proposal by the respective government and UNDP. The latter only lent assistance to the economic and social development of countries.

K. TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICAL TRAINING

(i) UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (Agenda item 7(a))

87. The representative of the UN Statistical Office introduced the document EC/STAT/UN.S-STDA/87/9(a) - Technical Assistance for Statistical Training in Africa by the United Nations (1985-86). The various ways in which the United Nations provide assistance in the area of statistical training were described. It was mentioned that through in-service training programmes under UN advisers, fellowship components and sometimes through a training adviser, assistance in statistical training is generally built into the country projects, including those under the NHSCP. It was also noted that the projects in NHSCP are designed in such a way that a complete self-sufficiency in technical expertise is expected to develop gradually.

88. Details were provided on the assistance given under the Regular Budget for technical cooperation of the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD). Two on-going projects were discussed. Modalities of implementation were provided to the meeting about the on-the-job training project for junior statisticians and programmers. It was mentioned that during 1985-87 Cameroon including ISSEA (Yaounde), Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya assisted in the implementation of the programme as host countries.

89. Details were then provided on the statistics courses conducted in the USSR using the rouble component of the UN. It was noted that 40 to 50 percent of all trainees were from the Africa region during 1985-87. It was proposed that the

details of these training courses should be published in the STPA Newsletter, once the funds are approved for the biennium 1988-89. Problems associated with the implementation of the projects were also mentioned.

90. Among the future plans, it was noted that, the on-the-job training project may be used for assistance in training teachers for middle level training, preferably from the statistically less developed countries of the region, and that inter-regional workshops in sampling and data processing may be held, if suitable host countries can be located.

91. Training opportunities in the software project were pointed out. Then an account was given about the newly formulated project under Canadian assistance given through UNFPA, for census training in sub-Saharan Africa. Details of the project components were described. It was noted that in addition to this project, UNFPA provides funds received from other donors for statistical training.

92. The representative of UNDP briefed participants on his organisation's activities in the development of statistics in Africa. This area had been given priority in the UNDP fourth programming cycle for Africa, adopted by ECA Council of Ministers of Planning in October 1986. Therefore, before its Governing Council adopted the 1987-1991 programme, at its May-June 1987 session, UNDP had approved in April 1987, the project entitled "Statistical Development Programme for Africa" with a total budget allocation of US$2,099,000.

93. The four-and-half years' project is a continuation of three projects financed by UNDP during the previous programming cycle, namely:

- African Household Survey Capability Programme;
- Assistance to least developed countries and newly independent countries in national accounts; and
- Operational support to the improvement and expansion of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa.

The UNDP's contribution to the three projects amounted to US$4,376,000.

94. The rapid approval of the integrated project bore witness to the interest of and the importance UNDP accorded the provision of reliable data to national policy-making authorities and the users at international level, particularly within the context of the Lagos Plan of Action, the Final Act of Lagos, Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Mention was made of some relevant actions contained in the integrated project document, of which ECA is the Executing Agency:

- Overlapping between the activities of the regional project with national IPFs;
- Training of trainers in the statistical training programme for Africa's centres;

- Assistance to Portuguese-speaking African countries for the establishment of professional and middle level statistical training centres and placing at the disposal of those countries of the services of national accounts advisers;

- Increase in the number of women who would benefit from the training to be offered during the project period. It would be advisable that 25 percent of the fellowships go to women; and

- Encouraging statistical training programme for Africa centres to establish relations with the private sector by offering specific training programmes or by developing consultations between national statistical offices and the private sector through, for instance, Chambers of Commerce, in the provision and the use of official statistics, as well as their publication so as to make them useful to the public and the private sectors.

95. It should be recalled that efforts made by UNDP since 1978 in favour of statistics in Africa included the on-going negotiations between the Africa office and the Arab States Office of the UNDP for the latter to contribute partly to the financing of that integrated project.

96. Considering the very limited resources as against the multiple needs in the area, it was necessary, as emphasised during previous statements by the secretariat that the statistical training programme for Africa centres should adopt an aggressive approach by presenting to the potential donors seriously prepared programmes so as to obtain the necessary funding for the implementation of those programmes, in order to ensure a better development of statistics in Africa.

97. The representative of UNFPA gave information concerning the training programmes undertaken by his organisation in the field of statistical training. He explained that UNFPA places emphasis on the training of national staff and this is generally conducted in the countries by international experts and at national and regional training institutes as well as outside the country through short term and long term fellowships. He further mentioned that STPA centres can use UNFPA assistance through two mechanisms, the country programmes which usually cover 4-5 years period and the inter-country programme.

98. Replying to a question raised by one of the participants concerning the possible direct assistance to the STPA centres, the UNDP representative and the ECA secretariat provided details on the assistance so far given to statistical training in Africa and outlined the future plans of assistance during 1987-91. In particular the ECA secretariat provided details concerning the Statistical Development Programme for Africa project which integrates activities in the areas of training, household surveys and basic economic statistics. Also the assistance being provided by the ILO in the provision of one specialist in labour force surveys and the bilateral arrangements with the Federal Republic of Germany in the provision of one specialist to assist in household surveys data processing.

99. It was suggested that the training centres might explore receiving funds from the private sectors, because the private sectors also benefit from the use of statistically trained personnel. However, it was pointed out that the contact must be made by the centres or their countries, because the UN offices cannot initiate any discussion with the private sectors.

100. It was mentioned that in urgent cases, the training centres may request ECA and/or UNSO for assistance in providing a lecturer for a specialized course provided the duration is short. All considerations will be given to provide a staff member or an adviser. However, these requests must be made well in advance of the anticipated time.

101. It was suggested by some participants at the meeting that when project documents are being prepared adequate provision should be made for training and that the courses to be offered and the locations of those courses should be identified well in advance.

102. The problem of the role of women within the framework of the STPA was raised by some participants. They stated that although it is UNDP policy that women should be given special recognition, the problem which STPA centres encounter is that the selection of trainees and trainers is done purely on merit. In response UNDP referred to the decade of women and the United Nations policy for the development of women and that a start has to be made to involve women at all levels. The purpose is to narrow the gap which has so far existed on the participation of women in development.

103. A participant raised the issue of procedures for getting assistance from various agencies and requested ECA to explain this procedure. The secretariat explained that these procedures are in general well known by all centres. With respect to assistance from ECA, some centres contact ECA directly with their requests or go through UNDP offices in their respective countries. With respect to the request for assistance from the country IPF funds, the representative of UNDP explained that the programme at country level is reviewed every two years. The use of the funds is negotiated between the UNDP and the country. What is desirable is that the regional funds provided to ECA should be linked to the country programmes.

(ii) EEC ASSISTANCE TO STPA (Agenda item 7(b))

104. This item was introduced by the representative of EEC. She spoke on actions taken, by way of assistance, by the EEC during the implementation of the actual project of EEC assistance to STPA on one hand and the possible second phase of this assistance on the other.

105. With regard to the first phase, she said that EEC signed a contract with the Institute of Statisticians (IOS), for technical assistance through:

- twinning between training centres in Africa and centres in Europe;
- teaching missions to FASTC in Dar-es-Salaam and ISAE in Kampala;
- study tours to ISAE and the University of Ghana; and
- supply of material.

106. The EEC had also signed a contract with the Munich centre in 1980 on the promotion of meetings between users and producers of statistics, in the form of seminars to be organized by the centre. A simulated economic model of these seminars, which constitutes the basis of these seminars will be freely used by all the interested countries after a preliminary test phase. Mention should also be made of the transfer of ISE training from CESD to Africa which was the subject of the contract signed with the "Institut de co-operation universitaire" in Rome; a part of that transfer had now been effected to ENSEA of Abidjan.

107. Other actions such as organization of ISE and ITS competitive examinations by the CESD, organization of meetings on the implementation of STPA (1984), STPA follow-up (1987) and the training of middle level staff for Portuguese-speaking African countries (1987) had been reported.

108. Additionally, EEC had financed the technical assistance for the training of middle level staff in Burundi and Central African Republic.

109. Finally, EEC had supported the preparation of a report on the evaluation of projects and EEC's actions in the field of statistical training in Africa (1987).

110. Following the actual project of EEC's assistance to STPA, it is planned to draw up a new project of assistance to STPA, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the evaluation report soon after it had been officially approved;the main elements of the new project would be the continuation of the support for the actions undertaken under the existing project and some new actions among which is included the provision of teaching support materials for the training of middle and professional level staff for the Portuguese-speaking African countries.

111. Discussions on that statement focused on:

- the preparation of a new project of assistance by EEC to STPA. On this, participants strongly recommended a close collaboration with the African countries or at least with ECA.

- the incomplete nature of the evaluation report because certain centres had not been covered during the surveys; and

- new procedures for granting fellowships.

112. The EEC representative explained that the evaluation study was not concerned with the actions contained in the EEC assistance project to STPA but with EEC actions in the field of statistical training in Africa in general. Therefore, certain centres participating in the STPA were not concerned.

113. Participants made known their concern over the project for the supply of micro-computer equipment and the relevant training, particularly as regards the administrative procedures demanding signatures of all the national authorising officials of the participating countries. According to the EEC representative, the inclusion of this project in a new global STPA project could constitute a favourable action.

(iii) ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICAL TRAINING (Agenda item 7(c))

114. The basic document presented under this agenda item is ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/8(c)). In its introduction, the secretariat first recalled the actions undertaken by the ECA since 1984 within the framework of special assistance to Portuguese-speaking African countries and then enumerated supplementary actions undertaken by the European Economic Community before highlighting the main conclusions of the joint EEC/ECA meeting of directors of national statistical offices of the countries of the group, held in Brussels in May 1987.

115. The following conclusions of the Brussels meeting were brought to the attention of the meeting:

- acceptance by the countries of the group to use the training centre established within the National School of Applied Statistics, Lisbon, Portugal, for the training of their high level statistical staff;

- Guinea Bissau's project for the establishment of a national regional centre in Bissau for the training of middle level "agents et adjoints techniques" and the acceptance of Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe to use this centre for the training of their middle level staff;

- organisation of a joint EEC/Portugal/ECA/Cape Verde/Sao Tome and Principe mission in November 1987 to Bissau to assess the infrastructures for hosting the middle level training centre;

- up-dating by ECA of the results of the study on the statistical training needs of the countries of the group;

- preparation of a guide-syllabus for the training of middle level staff; and

- organisation of a meeting in Luxembourg in February, 1988 to consider the guide syllabus for the training of middle level staff and the curricula of the national school of applied statistics.

116. In the ensuing discussion, a member of the Portuguese delegation first thanked ECA for inviting Portugal to participate in the meeting of the Directors of STPA centres and the secretariat for the quality of the documents presented. He then briefed the meeting on the following:

- The national statistics school of Lisbon will be named in principle "National School of Applied Statistics" and could be placed under the National Institute of Statistics of Portugal;

- The 9 months delay of the project was due to recent changes in the Portuguese Government. The new government is preparing to pass a law in the near future concerning the restructuring of the national statistical system which will include the establishment of this school;

- The main areas of the school's curricula were drawn up during the preparation of the school's documents. It was accepted that the instructors would spell out in detail the various areas of the courses. The summary programme would be sent to ECA;
- The Lisbon school would be headed by a Director assisted by two Assistant Directors one of whom would come from one of the African countries of the group who will be the director of the centre for statisticians from the countries of the group; and
- A plan for the construction of a new building for the national statistical institute which will host the school was under consideration and could be implemented within four years.

117. The Director of Statistics of Guinea Bissau informed the meeting that his country had accepted to train nationals of Cape Verde and Sao Tome & Principe in its future middle level statistical training centre, but indicated that some problems needed to be resolved. Those problems were contained in a document to be presented to the joint Portugal/EEC/ECA mission. As regards the appointment of the Portuguese-speaking African Assistant Director for the Lisbon school, he said it was a political issue which would be discussed at the Luxembourg meeting.

118. The representative of ISSEA stated that Equatorial Guinea was a member of the Central African Custom and Economic Union (UDEAC) and as a result, his centre had admitted in 1980, eight students from Equatorial Guinea in the "cycles des adjoints et avents techniques" but that the country was facing the problem of study grants.

119. The Director of the statistical college of Dakar regretted that efforts of his college to train nationals of Cape Verde (four in all) and of the Guinea Bissau (two) in the "cycles des ingenieurs des travaux statistique" did not appear in the introductory document relating to this agenda.

120. The representative of ISPC intimated that his institute was organising a training programme in Spanish and that it could be considered as a centre for the training of nationals of Equatorial Guinea.

121. As regards the problem of study grants for statistical training of the nationals of the Portuguese-speaking African countries, the meeting recommended that in addition to the facilities offered by the National Indicative Planning Figures (IPF), ECA could approach UNDP and EEC so that they would award fellowships from their regional funds.

122. The representative of the United Nations statistical office furnished some information on the in-service training of 5 scholarships holders from Sao Tome and Principe in Columbia and the efforts made for the promotion of statistical training in Mozambique. He said further that the UNSO collaborated with ECA in considering the possibility of sending 2 or 3 members of the national statistical service of Mozambique to Brazil within the framework of the training of trainers.

(iv) BILATERAL AND OTHER MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS
(Agenda item 7(d))

123. The agenda item was introduced on the basis of document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/8(d) and oral statements made by representative of the donor countries and organisations represented at the meeting.

French Government

124. Technical and Financial Assistance of the French Government is provided through the Ministries of Cooperation and Foreign Affairs with the assistance of INSEE. It is used for the organisation of basic training in the following African centres: ISSEA, IFORD, ENSEA, IAMSEA, ENEA, INSEA, and in France at CESD and at ENSAE. To these should be added continued training through courses organised at INSEE and IIAP.

125. The Director of "College statistique", ENEA clarified the situation concerning the French Government assistance in the field of training of statisticians. In this connection he stated that no French Government subvention was effectively allocated to the "College statistique" of ENEA in the field of its training.

United Kingdom

126. Technical assistance from the United Kingdom is provided through training in British universities and short courses. Apart from the training in the United Kingdom, it should be noted that British assistance is also provided in the countries. This assistance is estimated globally at £300,000 in 1985/86 and £500,000 in 1986-87 (if the past training in computing is included).

International Statistical Institute (ISI)

127. A statement was provided by the representative of the International Statistical Institute at the meeting. The activities were concerned with training and publication of documents. ISI is particularly ready to consider with interest all requests for technical assistance, despite its limited resources. The ISI also expressed its interest in preparing teaching materials and organising workshops and seminars with the collaboration of STPA centres.

Portugal

128. Portugal allocates each year training grants within the framework of bilateral co-operation agreements with Portuguese-speaking African countries. The use of the grants are determined by each country.

129. For some years now, these countries had been benefiting from technical assistance in the field of statistics through courses organised within the National Statistics Institute (NSI) and sending of experts to the countries on short missions fully sponsored by the Government of Portugal.

130. Besides, it is possible for the Portuguese-speaking African countries to benefit from technical and financial assistance from Portugal within the framework of their multilateral co-operation as is the case with Guinea Bissau where there is a project aimed at strengthening statistics supported by the Government of this country, UNDP and Portugal.

Sweden

131. With financing from SIDA and the World Bank, Statistics Sweden runs four assistance projects in the field of statistics in Somalia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. All the projects aim at strengthening the statistical offices of these countries and they include an important component of training both in Sweden and in the countries concerned.

ISPC, USA

132. Although the ISPC is not a funding organisation, it is able as in the past, to offer technical assistance and training if funded by a donor agency. The ISPC now offers one tuition fellowship annually for training of trainers. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the sustained support of USAID constitutes an important source of technical and financial assistance for the development of statistics in Africa.

Federal Republic of Germany

133. Part of the contribution of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany in this context is the financing of the Munich Centre and some parts of its activities.

L. APPLICATION TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE CENTRE OF STPA DEPARTMENT OF PROBABILITY AND STATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD, UNITED KINGDOM (Agenda item 8)

134. The secretariat introduced the agenda item which was based on document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/12 and explained that an application to become an associate member of STPA was received from the University of Sheffield, Department of Probability and Statistics. The secretariat also explained that there presently existed six associate STPA centres. The meeting was also reminded of the criteria for associate membership which were approved at the third meeting of directors of STPA centres in October/November 1983.

135. The representative of the University of Sheffield provided additional information to that provided in the document. He explained that the department has a long term dedication to the teaching of statistics and the University itself is in the forefront concerned with staff development.

136. In the discussion which followed participants were interested to know the specific activities which were planned by the Department of Probability and Statistics, University of Sheffield which had direct relevance to STPA. The representative of the University of Sheffield explained that although no specific activities were planned by his university, it had established a statistical service unit which could organise courses to meet specific needs of STPA. In order to do this the department would have to liaise closely with ECA and also it would undertake measures to study more specific programmes of relevance to STPA.

137. Some participants were interested to know the benefit STPA gets from having associate members and whether there was any limit to the number to be admitted. The secretariat explained that there was no limit in the number which can be admitted. With respect to the benefits to be gained from associate members, the secretariat explained that in general these centres contribute through their activities to the development of statistics in Africa.

138. The meeting recommended that the Department of Probability and Statistics, University of Sheffield should be admitted as the seventh associate STPA centre.

139. In conclusion the secretariat requested the French-speaking participants to assist in the identification of French-speaking centres which could become associate STPA centres. Also the United Nations Statistical Office was requested to assist in the identification of French-speaking centres in Canada which could be admitted as associate STPA centres.

M. DOCUMENT ON CREATING AND STRENGTHENING A STATISTICS TEACHING GROUP (Agenda item 9)

140. The secretariat introduced the agenda item which was based on document ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/13 and explained that it dealt with the problem of organising an institute or department of statistics and also the strengthening of an existing institute or department. The document was prepared by Prof. R.M. Loynes of the Department of Probability and Statistics at the University of Sheffield following agreement by the secretariat that the issues to be included in the document would be of interest to STPA and needed to be discussed in a broader content and at an appropriate forum. The idea is that a document should be prepared covering the various issues and should be available as a reference document to departments of statistics or institutes.

141. The representative of the University of Sheffield provided additional information concerning the origin of the proposal to develop the proposed document. He explained that very often young people with very little experience are appointed as heads of departments of statistics or institutes; hence they would need a document which would provide them with some guidance on how to start running a department or institute. For those heads of departments who are experienced enough, the document would be useful in providing ideas on how to solve some of the problems concerning the running of the department or institute.

142. In the discussion which followed many participants agreed to the proposal of preparing a document outlining the main issues. Some of the participants cited specific cases such as the attachment of a junior member of staff to a senior member of staff as a kind of apprentice which had been discussed at their institutions. Problems of high turnover of staff, thus requiring other staff to act in their positions were serious in some countries. Some participants suggested the inclusion of topics like 'Student counselling', 'Financial issues', etc., in the draft of the proposed document. The representative of the University of Sheffield requested those who wished to make suggestions to do so either through ECA or directly to his institution.

143. Some participants wanted to see the draft document first to enable them decide on the feasibility of the proposal. Others stated that if the document to be prepared would be treated like the guide syllabus prepared by ECA then they did not see any problems since the document would not be binding on the centres but would be used as and when needed.

144. Finally the meeting agreed to the proposal to prepare a draft document and directed that the ECA secretariat should take up the matter following the proposed timetable to enable the draft document to be ready for consideration by the sixth meeting of Directors of STPA centres.

N. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATJION OF STPA FOR THE PERIOD 1987-1991 (Agenda item 10)

145. The meeting adopted the future work programme for the implementation of STPA for the period 1987-1991 which is attached as annex I to the present report.

O. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 11)

146. The secretariat informed the meeting that in view of the budgetary constraints on the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (STPA) (1987-1991) project which includes the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), no provision has been made to support the biennial meetings of Directors of STPA centres for 1989 and 1991 and therefore the centres will have to financially support their participation. It was therefore necessary for STPA centres to begin planning at this stage on how they would finance their participation at the 1989 and subsequent meetings. The secretariat indicated that this was in accordance with the objective of self-reliance of the centres.

147. In response, two STPA centres informed the meeting that they would be in a position to finance the participation of their Directors at these meetings. These centres are the Department of Statistics, University of Botswana and the Centre européen de formation des statisticiens - économistes des pays en voie de développement (CESD). In addition, the Portuguese delegation at the meeting stated that once the professional statistics training school had been established in Lisbon, Portugal and admitted as an STPA centre, it should be possible for the centre to finance the participation of its Director at the future meetings of Directors of STPA centres.

148. All other STPA centres indicated that, while they agree on the objective of self-reliance, they would face serious foreign currency problems and hence it would be difficult for them at this stage to finance their participation at these meetings which they consider very useful. They requested the secretariat to approach UNDP and other donor agencies to provide financial support to the Directors to enable them participate at the future meetings of Directors of STPA centres.

149. An evaluation of the meeting was conducted at the end through a questionnaire supplied by the secretariat for the participants to complete. The results of the evaluation are attached as Annex II to this report.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF STPA

1. The fifth meeting of Directors of centres participating in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) from 26 to 30 October 1987 re-examined the work programme adopted in 1985 for the implementation of the future activities of the programme, taking into account the new developments which had occured in the meantime. In this connection, the meeting agreed that particular emphasis should be put on (i) training of trainers, (ii) training of middle level statisticians at national level, (iii) training of statistical personnel at all levels for the Portuguese-speaking African countries, (iv) support for post-graduate training programmes, (v) participation of women and (vi) participation of the private sector.

2. The meeting therefore adopted the following work programme to serve as a framework for the future actions for the development of the globabl STPA programme.

I. GENERAL ORIENTATION

3. The main objective of STPA is to ensure that the African region has a permanent supply of qualified staff for the statistical services and other national administrations and the private sector. Consequently, STPA will continue to make every effort aimed at organising the following categories of training bearing in mind the on-going programmes for improving basic economic statistics, establishment of national household survey facilities and other statistical development programmes for the African region:

a) Specialised training and post-graduate studies

High priority will be given to this type of training so as to make the African region less dependent on foreign institutions and personnel.

b) Basic University training

Strengthening of basic general university training ("ingenieur des travaux statistiques, ingenieur d'application de la statistique", B.A., B.Sc. and B.Stat) will continue. Training offered at this level by Departments of Statistics within national universities, particularly in the English-speaking African countries will be taken into account.

c) Training of middle level statisticians

Organisation of this type of training ("adjoint technique" or diploma and "agent technique" or certificate) will be strongly encouraged at the national level. This involves the establishment and/or development of national units for the training of middle level statistical staff, including in-service training. This type of training will also be given top priority. STPA centres offering this type of training should be maintained, even developed, if need be.

d) Short term courses

Centres participating in STPA will be encouraged to organise short term courses and seminars for the working statisticians. Thus, specialised training courses organised by associate centres will be considered an integral part of STPA.

e) Training of statisticians for the Portuguese-speaking African countries

Top priority will also be given to the training of middle and professional level statisticians for the Portuguese-speaking African countries, in actions to be taken, within the framework of STPA.

f) Research work

STPA centres, especially those involved in post-graduate training, will be encouraged to lay more emphasis on research activities. In order to achieve this objective, priority should be given to ways and means of acquiring the latest relevant journals, periodicals and textbooks.

g) Participation of women

Efforts will be made to increase the number of candidates to be admitted at STPA and associate centres, the number of statisticians working at national statistical services of the region and the number of female lecturers in the centres participating in the Programme.

h) Participation of the Private Sector

STPA centres will be encouraged to enter into some form of arrangements, as far as possible, with the private sector, so as to satisfy the specific needs of this sector in trained statistical staff.

II. STRENGTHENING OF CENTRES PARTICIPATING IN STPA AND THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATE CENTRES IN THE PROGRAMME

4. The following activities will be undertaken:

a) Operational support will be given to all centres participating in STPA to enable them contribute effectively to the attainment of the objectives set in the framework of the programme, particularly:

i) Assistance in the training of trainers: this assistance should take into account the different existing situations, according to the system within which the centre is operating, the juridical nature of the centre, the status of the teaching staff and the level of training offered. High priority will be given to centres offering specialised training and post-graduate studies as well as to national middle level training facilities.

ii) Provision of consultants, on a short-term basis, to give lectures in certain specialised areas;

iii) Supply, according to the needs, of full-time lecturers pending the return of the teaching staff from training. A particular attention will be given to centres providing post-graduate training;

iv) Provision of equipment, particularly, micro-computers, calculators, reproduction equipment, etc.;

v) Support as necessary, in the expansion or construction of premises;

vi) Support for the organisation of seminars and working groups in such priority areas of applied statistics as statistical computing, national accounts, agricultural statistics, sample surveys, data applications and analysis.

b) Assistance to two French-speaking STPA centres for the opening and/or development of a section for the training of statistician-economists;

c) Programmed assistance, based on a project document, for the establishment and/or development of specialised post-graduate programmes at the Department of Statistics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and at the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Makerere University, Uganda.

d) Assistance to African countries which may wish to establish or develop national training courses for middle level statistical staff, including in-service training.

e) Support for the non-STPA African national centres for the training of professional level statistical staff; this support will be given by aid institutions within the framework of the indicative planning figures for each country; however, it will be necessary to involve these centres in the co-operative development of teaching programmes to ensure a more practical re-orientation of their courses.

f) STPA associate centres will play a major role in the organisation of courses, seminars and specialised short training courses for the countries of the region in view of the great needs expressed in these areas. As far as possible, these centres will undertake activities in Africa so as to take into account local conditions.

III. TEACHING PROGRAMMES AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON STATISTICAL TRAINING ACTIVITIES

5. STPA will continue to emphasise the co-operative development of teaching programmes and the dissemination of information on statistical training activities relevant to the African region.

a) Periodic review of professional and middle level training guide syllabuses as well as in-service training guide syllabuses prepared within the framework of STPA, taking into account the new elements in statistical development in the region and in the world. In this connection, special effort will be made to ensure adequate training in household survey techniques, national accounts and related basic economic statistics as well as electronic data processing.

b) Promotion of the effective use of professional and middle level training guide syllabuses as well as in-service training guide syllabuses by STPA and non-STPA centres as well as by national statistical services.

c) Continued support for STPA French-speaking centres in the organisation of joint competitive entrance examinations in order to further harmonise the curricula and qualifications.

d) Support for the STPA English-speaking countries so as to consider ways and means of ensuring a certain degree of equivalence in the curricula and the admission conditions in addition to the use of the guide syllabuses.

e) Support for the STPA centres in the arrangements aimed at twinning with well-known statistical training institutions outside the African region.

f) Promotion of exchange of information among STPA centres.

g) Wide dissemination of information on statistical training activities in Africa and outside the region through the publication of "STPA News", "Directory of STPA and associate centres", "Directory of non-STPA centres" and other appropriate means of communication.

h) Support for the STPA centres in the development and production of teaching manuals and textbooks.

i) Support for the publication and the dissemination of the results of research undertaken by the STPA centres.

IV. SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING AFRICAN COUNTRIES

6. This programme will also be given top priority in the execution of the activities of the overall STPA programme.

a) Support for the establishment, within the National Statistical School of Portugal now being set up, of a professional level statistical training centre for the nationals of the Portuguese-speaking African countries.

b) Support for the establishment and the development of a national centre offering sub-regional services in Bissau and national centres in Angola and Mozambique for the training of middle level statistical staff for the countries of the group.

c) Support for securing fellowships for training of trainers and student fellowships in sufficient number with a view to promoting statistical training for the benefit of the countries of the group.

d) Support for the organisation of courses and seminars for working statisticians of the countries of the group.

e) Drawing up of professional and middle level training guide syllabuses for the Portuguese-speaking African countries and the periodic review of these guide syllabuses.

f) Preparation of teaching materials in support of the statistical training programmes of the countries of the group.

g) Support for the STPA centres effectively contributing in the training of statisticians for the Portuguese-speaking African countries.

V. CO-ORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES

7. In order to ensure maximum effectiveness and success of the overall STPA programme, the following activities will be undertaken.

a) Periodic evaluation of the activities undertaken within the framework of the STPA: to this end, it will be necessary to organise an annual survey on the results achieved by the STPA centres as well as a periodic survey on the organisation and the staffing of statistical services in Africa.

b) Measures to procure a sufficient number of fellowships for study at STPA centres and associate centres. To this end, African Governments should earmark a sufficient number of fellowships for statistical training, either from their national resources or from external assistance funds. The donors should facilitate and accelerate, as much as possible, the procedures for granting the fellowships.

c) Follow-up of the implementation of the Resolution 578(XXI) of the ECA Conference of Ministers on the "Strengthening of the Statistical Training Programme for Africa" adopted in Yaounde in August 1986.

d) Co-ordination by ECA of the technical and financial assistance from various bilateral and multilateral donor agencies to STPA, including EEC, CFTC and UNDP.

e) Co-ordination of the overall activities undertaken in the development of the STPA.

f) Organisation of the biennial meeting of Directors of centres participating in the STPA.

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

Overall the completed thirteen evaluation forms indicate that participants were generally satisfied with the administrative organization of the meeting. However, some participants felt that the daily sessions could be slightly extended in the morning and afternoon to enable more time for discussion. In addition some participants felt that the discussions could end a day before the adoption of the report.

On the topics for the meeting and the discussions which took place some participants felt that the topic, development of post-graduate training and research could have been discussed in more detail. Others felt that during the introduction of the agenda items the interpretations were sometimes not clear. The discussions were thought by the majority of the participants to have been practically oriented although some of them thought the discussions covered a good balance of theory and applications.

On the topics which participants would have liked to be included in the agenda the following suggestions were made:

- setting up of a regional statistical training centre for the Southern Africa region; and

- the development of teaching materials.

With respect to the documentation for the meeting, some of the participants felt that they were very good and others thought that some of the documents tended to be lengthy. Some participants indicated that the documentation ought to be sent to them well in advance. On the translation of the documents some participants indicated that in some cases the translated documents were not very clear. On the document "Creating and Strengthening a Statistics Teaching Group" (ECA/STAT/DM.5-STPA/87/13) one participant felt that the title should have been "Document on creating and strengthening of a statistics teaching group".

With respect to the contribution of the participants in the overall STPA programme some of the participants felt that their contribution would be more than before while others said it would be at the same level as before. Increase of participation in the in-service training programmes was particularly mentioned by some of the participants.

On the attainment of the objectives of the meeting, some participants felt that the meeting had achieved its objectives but that details were needed on the commitment of donor agencies and the procedures for getting their assistance.

Finally, some participants mainly delegates from STPA centres and user countries indicated the following among the greatest problems expected in putting into practice the recommendations of the meeting.

a) Use of guide syllabuses

- The formulation of a syllabus which is at least as good as the guide syllabus,
- Adoption of the guide syllabus within the university framework of programmes.

b) Post-graduate training

- Lack of lecturers, equipment and fellowships for trainees,
- Lack of financial support for the programme,
- Problem of attracting enough number of students to make the programme viable.

c) Research

- Obtaining finance for research in view of the fact that this is not programmed,
- Heavy teaching load of the academic staff particularly in the case where students have a poor background, thus making it impossible for staff to have enough time for research,
- Lack of specialised books, journals and vehicles for field trips in order to carry out research.

d) In-service statistical training/middle level training at national level

- Quota system existing at universities puts a limit on the number that can be trained at any one time,
- Willingness of institutions to share responsibilities and the willingness of the national statistical offices to utilize the expertise available at the centres.

e) Workshops and seminars

- No funds programmed for this purpose,
- Lack of resource personnel for conducting the workshops and seminars,
- Lack of accommodation and other services for the participants.

f) Others

- Participation of women: selection of trainees and trainers at centres is usually on merit by index number,
- Private sector participation hardly exists in some countries,
- Obtaining financial assistance for the centres in particular fellowships for the training of national members of staff.